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Voice of the people

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A Ukrainian reply to book on Nazis in U.S.

DE KALB—Americans who believe McCarthyism is dead in this country haven't met Allan J. Ryan Jr., author of "Quiet Neighbors: Prosecuting Nazi War Criminals in America."

A former director of the Department of Justice's Office of Special Investigations [OSI], Ryan was in Chicago recently plugging his book and claiming that "at least 10,000 Nazi war criminals illegally came here after World War II."

According to Ryan, most "Nazis" settled in America as a result of the "brazenly discriminatory" Displaced Persons Act of 1948 which, Ryan argues, "was written to exclude as many concentration camp survivors as possible and to include as many Baltic and Ukrainian and ethnic German refugees as it could get away with."

As in the case of the late Sen. Joseph McCarthy, who attempted to scare Americans into believing that the federal government had been inundated with Communists during the 1950s, Ryan can only offer bogus evidence to substantiate his alarmist assertions.

According to Ryan, some 116,000 Baltic and Ukrainian displaced persons and 53,000 Volksdeutsche came to the United States after World War II. "If even 5 percent of those people had taken part in the persecution [of Jews]," he writes, "then over 8,000 [the figure is now up to 10,000] Nazi criminals are here." He admits that such estimates are hardly scientific. Indeed, he sheepishly concedes "they are speculation dressed in very light clothing." Nevertheless, Ryan reaches the incredible conclusion that these numbers "give a certain perspective to the question of how many Nazi persecutors came to this country."

Ryan predicates many of his allegations regarding displaced persons on two scholarly publications: "The Destruction of European Jews," by Raul Hilberg; and "America and the Survivors of the Holocaust," by Leonard Dinnerstein. Unfortunately, Ryan distorts both sources.

Citing Hilberg, for example, Ryan writes that even the Germans were "frightened by the bloodthirstiness" of the Ukrainians in killing Jews. When one checks Hilberg, however, one discovers that the reference was to the Volksdeutsche [ethnic Germans] in the Ukraine, not Ukrainians.

Citing Dinnerstein, Ryan argues that the Berlin Document Center [BDC], which contained the record of every person who had ever been affiliated with the Nazis, was useless in checking displaced persons' backgrounds because "Hitler's record keepers had shown no interest in sympathizers in Eastern Europe." Dinnerstein, however, wrote that the BDC was not helpful "because people changed their names or their spellings and they did not show up in the records."

Despite the fact that every displaced person had to undergo an exhaustive series of checks by the FBI, the CIA, the Counter-Intelligence Corps of the U.S. Army and six other U.S. agencies, and even though an investigation by a special subcommittee of the House Judiciary Committee concluded that chances for fraud were "practically nil," Ryan still chooses to believe that "boatload after boatload" of Nazi war criminals came to the U.S. after World War II.

As an American of Ukrainian descent, I am incensed by Ryan's repeated attempts to paint all Ukrainians with the brush of anti-

Semitism. Yes, the Ukraine had people who were members of an auxiliary police which collaborated with the Nazis but so did every nation in Nazi-occupied Europe. According to Israel's War Crimes Investigations Office, only some 1,000 Ukrainians [out of a national population of 40 million] were directly involved in anti-Jewish actions, a percentage that hardly qualifies my people for the kind of collective guilt Ryan heaps upon us.

Sure the Ukrainians welcomed the German army when it invaded the Soviet Union. Having just suffered through Stalin's collectivization campaign during which some 7 million Ukrainians died in a manmade famine, having watched hundreds of thousands of Ukrainians shipped off to Siberia for resisting Bolshevik terror and having experienced untold misery because of their religious convictions, Ukrainians were ready to welcome anyone who was Stalin's enemy.

Once Ukrainians learned of Hitler's true aims in the Ukraine, however, they quickly turned against the Nazis and organized a resistance movement that was on a par with any underground group then operating in Europe.

If the OSI wants the support of the Ukrainian community in its hunt for Nazi war criminals it can have it. First, however, we have to be convinced that the OSI, which uses KGB-supplied witnesses and evidential material extensively, is not on a witch hunt perpetrated by Soviet-initiated disinformation for no other purpose than to discredit and defame one of America's strongest anticommunist communities.

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